

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-25 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 5, 11, 12 and 24 are amended. Applicants appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 11, 12 and 20-22.

Claim 12 was objected to based on an informality. Claim 12 has been amended in order to refer to the upstream and downstream air ducts of claim 11. It is respectfully requested that the objection be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 3-5, 8, 13, 23 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over Ishii et al. (Ishii), U.S. Publication No. 2004/0263601. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Ishii fails to disclose an image forming apparatus with an air suctioning portion that includes a downstream air suctioning portion and an upstream air suctioning portion disposed downstream of and upstream of the ink receiver in a sheet feeding direction and both the downstream air suctioning portion and the upstream air suctioning portion have a plurality of openings arranged in a direction perpendicular to the sheet feeding direction, as recited in claims 1 and 24.

Ishii discloses an image forming apparatus with a hard porous material 714 located on the recording medium delivery surface 705 (paragraph [0168] and Fig. 20). The hard porous material 714 is located at positions corresponding to the paper widths of various recording media 1 to be used for printing, that is, positions set apart leftwards at central distances W1, W2, ... Wn with respect to a common position on the right end in Fig. 20. As shown in Fig. 20, a sucking chamber 706 and a suck hole 708 are located between adjacent hard porous materials 714.

As shown in Ishii's Fig. 20, the sucking chamber 706 and sucking hole 708 are only located on the downstream side (and not the UPSTREAM side) of the hard porous

materials 714. Ishii thus suffers deficiencies in that sheet curling can occur on the upstream side of the hard porous materials 714.

Thus, Ishii fails to disclose all of the features recited in claims 1 and 24 and the additional features recited in their dependent claims. It is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

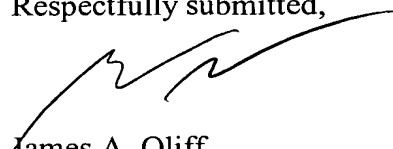
Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over JP 2002-144650 (JP '758) in view of Ishii, claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ishii in view of JP 2002-361904, claim 9 was rejected under 35 U. S.C. §103(a) over Ishii in view JP 2001-347691, claims 14 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ishii in view of JP 1-275090, claim 16 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ishii in view of Matsubishi, U. S. Patent No. 5,997,129, and claims 17-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ishii in view of Kodama et al., U.S. Publication No. 2005/0078147. The rejections are respectfully traversed.

None of the remaining applied references overcomes the deficiencies of Ishii noted above with respect to claims 1 and 24. In particular, JP'691's air suctioning portion 64 is a single opening located downstream of and upstream of each ink receiver 612, 613 and are thus not a plurality of openings arranged in a direction perpendicular to a sheet feeding direction, as recited in claims 1 and 24. It is respectfully requested that the rejections be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-25 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff  
Registration No. 27,075

Scott M. Schulte  
Registration No. 44,325

JAO:SMS/sxb

Attachment:  
Petition for Extension of Time

Date: February 13, 2006

**OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC**  
**P.O. Box 19928**  
**Alexandria, Virginia 22320**  
**Telephone: (703) 836-6400**

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